

# NAVIGATING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

BY BOBBY COOLEY

How much is too much? What if my kid wants to quit mid-season? Should I push my child or let them select the activities they want to do?

## 1. One at a time.

One sport each season or one instrument lesson. When we set up boundaries like this, it communicates that we are focusing our attention on one thing in order to get the most out of that experience.

## 2. What is the WHY?

Why are we playing sports? It is NOT to go pro. Instead, it's about learning lessons, working as a team, pushing yourself, etc. Make sure that you keep this perspective at the center of all activities you allow your children to do. Make sure the WHY is not connected to living vicariously through your child - just because you won the state championship in basketball does not mean your kids will love to play basketball.

## 3. Relationships matter.

If you can, do your best to connect the activities with established relationships. Making it relational will make practices more fun and bonds will grow stronger. It's also more fun for parents to get together and cheer in the stands or concert halls together. Relationships matter.

## 4. Your words matter.

I had an old friend mention to me that after every game he makes it a point to tell his kids, "I just love to watch you play." He doesn't talk about the homerun or game winning shot or the missed note on the Tuba. He simply affirms who they are, not what they do. It's going to be hard for your kids to NOT identify themselves with the activities they do, so parents need to be extra intentional in choosing words that help them do that.

## 5. Teach your kids how to WIN and LOSE.

The big picture is that winning and losing in Little League isn't on their resume for college. However, learning how to win and lose in Little League will set them up as adults. We all have seen those adults who throw a fit when they fail. Don't let this be your kids. Spend extra time with them and help them navigate success and failure so that they can be productive adults.

Five Tips: Lessons learned from other parents

On a scale of 1-10 (one being not very busy and ten being crazy busy),  
**How busy are you as a family when it comes to extra-curricular activities?**

① \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ ⑩

**What lessons do you hope your kids learn through their extra-curricular activities?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-10 (one being little and ten being a lot)  
**How much time do you spend correcting failure or praising success when it comes to your kid's activities?**

① \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ ⑩

**Make a list of how you would like your kids to respond:**

## When they Win / Succeed

Example: They remain humble

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## When they Lose / Fail

Example: They do not throw a fit

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How will you leverage extra-curricular activities to teach your kids to respond the way you listed above?**